Legal
Services
Society

British Columbia
www.lss.bc.ca

News Release

April 25, 2008

Kamloops lawyers recognized for exemplary legal aid work

Vancouver, BC — Kamloops lawyers Fred Kaatz and David Dundee are widely known for their exemplary service to legal aid clients. Now, they've been officially acknowledged for their outstanding work.

The Legal Services Society (LSS) presented recognition awards to Kaatz and Dundee as part of an event held in Kamloops on April 24 to honour all local lawyers' contributions in making access to justice a reality for people with low incomes.

Chief Judge Hugh Stansfield, a keynote speaker at the event, told the 70 in attendance that "while the Court appreciates all counsel, there is a very special sense of appreciation for those lawyers who quietly and consistently, but assertively, go the extra mile for indigent clients, case after case, year after year. Their dedicated advocacy breathes life into our understanding of equality before the law, and access to justice."

Criteria for the individual lawyer awards include a willingness to take on difficult cases, years and quality of legal aid service, results achieved for clients, mentoring activities, and community service. "This year's recipients meet the highest standards of excellence," said LSS Executive Director Mark Benton.

Fred Kaatz, called to the Bar in 1973, has been doing criminal defense work for the past 20 years. Known for taking difficult cases and for his willingness to work with hard-to-handle youth, he is much loved by his clients. A lawyer who is always willing to go above and beyond—for his clients and his colleagues—Fred is greatly respected by both Crown and defense counsel, as well as the judiciary and justice system support staff.

David Dundee, called to the Bar in 1982, has practiced family law exclusively for the past 14 years and is also a family law mediator. He takes on difficult cases and difficult clients, and gives all of them champagne service on a beer budget. What sets him apart is his commitment to legal aid as a social responsibility. In addition, he volunteers for a wide range of Canadian Bar Association and Continuing Legal Education committees and events.

Previous recognition events have been held in Kamloops, Kelowna, Prince George, Surrey, Terrace, Vancouver and Victoria. In all, 17 BC lawyers have now received awards for service excellence, including, in 2004, Kamloops family lawyer Stephen Soll and criminal lawyer Ken Tessovitch.

About 80 lawyers throughout the Interior/East Kootenays region served by the Kamloops Regional Centre accepted legal aid referrals in 2006/2007, providing legal representation for over 2,300 clients. Some 60 lawyers who provided duty counsel services in the region that year did so for over 7,800 issues.

LSS is an independent, non-profit organization that has provided legal aid to people with low incomes in BC since 1979.

Legal representation is available for serious family, child protection, and criminal issues. It is also available for some immigration, mental health law, and prison law matters.

Legal advice is available at most courts through duty counsel and by telephone through LawLINE and the Brydges Line (both are province-wide toll-free lines).

Legal information is available through Legal Information Outreach Worker (LIOW) services, LawLINE, plain language publications, and Internet services, including the Family Law in BC, LSS, and LawLINK websites. (See www.lss.bc.ca for most of our publications, our catalogue, and website links.)

*To contact the **LSS Call Centre** and **LawLINE**, dial: (604) 408-2172 (Lower Mainland) or 1-866-577-2525 (toll free from outside the Lower Mainland).*

Suite 400
510 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC V6C 3A8

Tel: (604) 601-6000
Fax: (604) 682-7967

In partnership with lawyers who provide legal aid, LSS develops quality assistance initiatives to ensure people with low incomes receive high calibre services. These measures promote best practices through education and other means. Recognition of lawyers' contributions is one part of this work

The quality assistance program began in 2001 with funding from the Law Foundation of BC.

For further information, see the attached backgrounder and / or contact:

Mark Benton, QC
Executive Director
Legal Services Society, Vancouver
(604) 601-6004

Kathleen Kendall
Managing Lawyer
Legal Services Society, Kamloops
(250) 314-1900